

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
OCALA DIVISION**

SUZANNE CHRISTINE HOWELL,

Plaintiff,

v.

Case No: 5:20-cv-464-GKS-PRL

**COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL
SECURITY,**

Defendant.

ORDER

This case is before the Court on the Commissioner's second motion to stay the case for 90 days, or until the Social Security Agency ("SSA") regains the capacity to produce the certified transcript of the record necessary for this case. (Doc. 14). Due to the global COVID-19 crisis, the SSA has transitioned to a maximum telework environment which prevented it from adhering to its business process for preparing the transcript of the record in many cases. Additionally, the complaints filed in SSA cases have increased, which has resulted in a backlog of work, making it difficult for the agency to process the transcripts in a timely manner. As the Commissioner explains in detail in the instant motion, there has been additional delay and uncertainty in the process due to transitioning the workload to vendors, but that the agency is actively working on numerous specific improvements to increase productivity and to manage the current backlog. Those specific improvements are outlined in the Commissioner's motion (Doc. 1), and include efforts such as establishing an in-house transcription group, maximizing vendors' productivity, and hiring additional Civil Action Assistants.

The Commissioner notes that the motion is opposed, but that Plaintiff is agreeable to a 60-day extension for the Commissioner to file an answer and transcript.

Accordingly, and considering the overall circumstances, the Commissioner's opposed second motion to stay (Doc. 14) is GRANTED in part. The Commissioner shall file an answer and the transcript of the record for this case within 60 days or shall file another motion if an additional extension is necessary.

DONE and **ORDERED** in Ocala, Florida on March 24, 2021.



PHILIP R. LAMMENS
United States Magistrate Judge

Copies furnished to:

Counsel of Record
Unrepresented Parties